

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

subject 1. An information input apparatus, comprising:
an imaging device that forms images of a
subject;

5 a sound recording device that records
sounds;

a storage medium that stores at least one of
the images formed by the imaging device and the sounds
input by the sound recording device;

10 a release switch that initiates a
predetermined process;

a sound effect output device that outputs a
preset sound effect when the release switch is operated;
and

15 a control device that controls the sound
effect output device so that the preset sound effect will
not be output with the sounds recorded by the sound
recording device when the release switch initiated the
predetermined process.

Sub H 2. The information input apparatus of claim 1,
further comprising:

a view finder through which the subject can
be observed; and

25 an information output device that outputs
visual information within the viewfinder, wherein the
predetermined process is an image recording process that
forms at least one image of the subject using the imaging
device and stores the at least one image in the storage
medium, wherein the control device further controls the
30 information output device to output a visual release
switch indication when the release switch is operated.

3. The information input apparatus of claim 1,
wherein the preset sound effect is a shutter sound
effect, wherein the storage medium stores a plurality of
35 types of the shutter sound effect, and wherein the sound
effect output device outputs one of the plurality of

types of the shutter sound effect when the release switch is operated.

4. The information input apparatus of claim 1, wherein the storage medium stores the images and the sounds together.

5. The information input apparatus ^{of claim 1,} further comprising a setting device that sets a photographic environment, wherein when the release switch is operated the sound effect output device further outputs sound effects based on the photographic environment set by the setting device.

6. The information input apparatus of claim 5, wherein the setting device is a compression device that compresses the images formed by the imaging device at a selected one of a plurality of compression rates.

7. The information input apparatus of claim 6, wherein a frequency of the sound effects output by the sound effect output device is changed based on the selected compression rate.

8. The information input apparatus of claim 6, wherein the setting device further sets an information input apparatus operating mode, wherein the sound effect output device outputs ~~the sound~~ ^{the sound} effects based on the operation mode set by the setting device.

9. The information input apparatus of Claim 8, further comprising a changing device that changes the sound effects corresponding to the operation mode.

10. The information input apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:

a sound playback device that outputs the sounds stored in the storage medium; and

a sound removing device that silences all or part of the preset sound effect when the preset sound effect is included in the sounds stored by the storage medium.

11. The information input apparatus of claim 10, further comprising a selection device that selects

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sound\recording means for inputting sounds;

storage means for storing the images formed

indicating means for indicating start of a

sound effect ~~output~~ means for outputting

control means for \controlling the sound

effect output means, wherein the preset sound effects will not be output with the sounds input by the sound recording means when the predetermined process is started.

5 17. The information input apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

41 observation means for observing the subject; and

10 information output means for outputting visual information within the observation means, wherein the indicating means is a release button, wherein the predetermined process is an image recording process that stores the images formed by the imaging means in the storage means, wherein the control means controls the
15 information output means to output a visual release button indication when the predetermined process is started.

20 18. The information input apparatus of claim 16, further comprising setting means for setting one compression rate among a plurality of compression rates for the images formed by the imaging means, wherein a frequency of the preset sound effects corresponds to the compression rate set by the setting means.

25 Sub Dle 19. The information input apparatus of claim 18, wherein the setting means further sets an information input apparatus operating mode, wherein the preset sound effects correspond to the operation mode set by the setting means.

30 20. The information input apparatus of claim 16, further comprising:

sound playback means for playback of the sounds stored in the storage means; and

35 sound silencing means for silencing all or part of the preset sound effects when the preset sound effects are included in the sounds stored by the storage means.

Sub H 21. The information input apparatus of claim 20,

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outputting visual information within the viewfinder, wherein the predetermined process is an image recording process that stores the images formed by the imaging device in the storage medium, wherein the visual information is a release switch operation indication when the release switch is operated.

26. The method of claim 24, further comprising setting the photographic environment with a setting device, wherein the sound effect outputting step outputs the sound effect based on the photographic environment set by the setting device.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the setting step sets an information input apparatus operating mode and the outputting step outputs the sound effect based on the operation mode set by the setting device.

28. The method of claim 24, further comprising:
playing back the sounds stored in the storage medium with a speaker; and

silencing the sound effect when the sound effect is included in the sounds recorded by the sound recording device.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein the silencing step comprises deleting the sound effect from the sounds when the sound effect is included in the sounds recorded by the sound recording device.

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C2 30. The method of claim 28, wherein the sound outputting step outputs the sound effect using a frequency outside a frequency range of the sound recording device, the storage medium or the speaker.

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